

The World of the Maya



The Mayan Empire covered the area we know today as the Yucatan Peninsula and stretched southward into the countries of Belize, Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador.

The Maya built great city states within their empire. Unfortunately these city-states waged fierce wars against each other. Many were abandoned. This is the city of Chichen Itza



The High Priests Temple



The Maya were polytheistic, They worshipped many gods. Their society was Ruled by a king but he was often told how to rule his city-state by the high priest. The priest would climb to the top and pray to the gods. Religion was extremely important to the Maya

The Maya were master builders

The Maya built great temples from stones carried many miles from the hills in the Central Lowlands. Most were four sided, believed to relate to each season. Some have exactly 360 steps to the top. It is believed that some of these temples were used as giant calendars!



The temple at Chichen Itza

The small, square section at the top was for the high priest. No one else could climb to the top. From there he would conduct the special services or rituals that involved the entire city-state.




THE MAYA USED A SYSTEM OF WRITING CALLED GLYPHS.

Below are samples of their work. They would carve their writing into the walls around the city-state.








THE MAYA HAD A SYSTEM OF MATH.
 AS ONE CAN SEE, IT WAS EASY TO UNDERSTAND.
 THEY WERE THE FIRST KNOWN CIVILAZTION
 TO USE "ZERO" IN MATHEMATICS

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0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
— —	• — —	• • — —	• • • — —	• • • • — —	— — —	• — — —	• • — — —	• • • — — —	• • • • — — —
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19

Mathematical count

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20	21	41	61	122	400	401	8000	

THE MAYAN CALENDAR

Unit's name	Time period	Glyph
Baktun	144,000 days	
Katun	7,200 days	
Tun	360 days	
Uinal	20 days	
Kin	1 day	

The Maya created a very complex calendar. The finished product was like the gears on your bicycle. The larger cogs on the outside were for the days, the smaller cogs, closer to the center, were for the years.

This is a drawing of a completed Mayan calendar. Their calendar cycle next ends in the year 2012. There are some who believe that on that day the world may end?



The Maya were expert stone masons

The Maya did not write books so their history was recorded in stone. This is a carving of one of their kings and it was sculptured into the side of a temple at Chichen Itza. You can see that their culture used very decorative headwear.



A Mayan Warrior

This is a tourist poster from the resort of Cancun. The photograph depicts what they believed a Mayan warrior looked like if he was Alive today. The face paint is made From local plants and mineral rocks In the Yucatan area. The headdress is constructed from metals and minerals found in the peninsula. The remainder of the Headdress are feathers and skins taken from small exotic birds and Animals native to the area.



A Mayan statue and the Temple at Chichen Itza



King Pacal

One of the greatest Mayan kings, according to their legend, was Pacal. This engraving was done during his reign and found in a temple hidden in the rain forest in the country of Belize.



An artist's impression of Mayan warriors going into battle. Note that one of the warriors is dressed like a jaguar, the sacred and worshipped animal of the rain forests. The warrior on the right is dressed to symbolize an eagle, their bird of worship.



Jaguar and Eagle
Warriors of Tlaxcala

The Mayan god Chac

The Maya had many gods. Their life revolved around the weather as they were great farmers. Chac was worshipped during the planting, growing and harvest seasons.



The Jaguar rules the rain forests and the
Mayan carving symbolizes their power

